



July – Summer Safety Month

Commanding Officer's Message

The summer months are often a high point of our year as service members take a well-deserved vacation and spend time with family and friends at backyard barbeques and trips to the beach -- the summer allows for an opportunity to relax and refresh. However, many of the activities that are pursued during vacation time put service members and families at risk for accidents that have potentially serious consequences.

No one plans to be in a mishap, but when one occurs, a good time can turn tragic in an instant. During Summer 2012, 33 Sailors and Marines lost their lives between Memorial Day and Labor Day in personal motor vehicle accidents, drownings, pedestrian fatalities, and other recreational activities.¹ The good news is that simple risk management before engaging in activities such as water sports, recreating and exercising outdoors, and especially driving is almost always enough to keep Sailors, Marines, and their family members safe.

What can leadership do?

1. **All military leaders must emphasize how important it is for everyone in our DoD community to follow simple precautions while traveling on the nation's roads.** The Naval Safety Center's Travel Risk Planning System (TRiPS) is an excellent resource for safe driving guidance. It is an on-line, automated risk-assessment tool. Sailors and Marines use it before they go on liberty or leave, driving outside command travel limits. The system helps them recognize—and avoid—the hazards they face on the highway: fatigue, not buckling up, and driving too far.

As Sailors, Marines, and family members drive to and from vacation destinations, remember that 81 percent of the Department of Defense (DoD) non-combat fatalities in 2012 total took place over the summer. Last summer, 80 service members died in motor vehicle collisions; 27 in 4-wheel vehicles, 47 while riding motorcycles, 4 were pedestrians, and 2 were bicyclists. These fatalities occurred in spite of state laws and DoD policies requiring the use of seatbelts while in a car and protective gear while riding motorcycles and bicycles.² An untold number of deaths resulted from fatigue – deaths preventable by proper trip planning and fatigue management while driving.



2. **Educate Sailors and Marines about water activity safety (both on and off the job).** It is important to follow swimming area rules and to be aware of the hidden dangers inherent in participating in water activities. Some Sailors and Marines will enjoy water activities such as swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, or water skiing. Sadly, six service members died while participating in water-related activities last summer.
3. **Communicate to service members about the importance of recognizing risks and making good decisions.** Alcohol is all too often a component in these tragic accidents. Alcohol, even in small quantities, impairs decision-making and is often a significant factor in many accidents. Before taking the first sip, remember to NEVER drink and drive. Plan ahead and always think before acting.

Fundamental military lessons of working together, exercising leadership, focusing on the mission, and having the courage to say “NO” to a risky situation are all essential to enjoying the summer and having all service members return safely to their command. Take advantage of the warm weather and the summer season – and remember to take care of each other.

For additional information on Summer Safety, visit the Navy Safety Center or the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center Websites.

Navy Safety Center:

<http://safetycenter.navy.mil/>

Naval Safety Center TRiPS --The Travel Risk Planning System:

http://www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/Pages/ashore/motor_vehicle/trips.aspx

Naval Safety Center Summer Safety Campaign ‘Live to Play - - Play to Live’:

<http://www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/Pages/media/seasonal/index.aspx>

NMCPHC Injury and Violence Prevention Website:

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/injury-violence-free-living/Pages/injury-violence-free-living.aspx>

NMCPHC July Summer Safety Toolbox:

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/Pages/hp-toolbox-july.aspx>

References:

1. Navy Safety Center. Summer 2013 Safety Campaign: Live to play, play to live. 2013. 23 May 2013.
http://www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/Documents/media/seasonal_campaign/presentations/Summer_2013-Statistics.pdf
2. Secretary of Defense, Hagel. Safe Summer Season UNCLASSIFIED Message to All DoD Activities.
<http://www.acq.osd.mil/ie/download/SecDef%20Summer%20Safety%20Message%202013.pdf>.
May 02, 2013. May 15, 2013.